

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For More Information Contact**

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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO HOLD MEETING TO ADDRESS HIV  
HEALTH SERVICES ISSUES**

(Richmond, Va.)—The Virginia Department of Health is identifying and addressing critical gaps in services provided to HIV-infected Virginians. This vital issue is the focus of a statewide planning meeting in Charlottesville, Virginia on June 18, 2004.

“Our goal is to identify strategies which reduce disparities in health care services for people who are without health insurance and living with HIV,” said State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. “We encourage all health care providers, HIV-infected individuals and community-based organizations to attend this meeting.”

The Ryan White Statewide Coordinated Statement of Need (SCSN) meeting will address the needs of HIV-infected Virginians who are uninsured or do not currently receive services. “It is critical that we receive input from people who are HIV-infected but may not be receiving services. We need and value their input in our efforts to develop and maintain a useful statewide coordinated plan that improves their quality of life,” said Casey W. Riley, director of the Division of HIV/STD at the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). In addition to HIV-infected individuals, health care providers, community based organization, AIDS Service Providers, Ryan White Care Act Title representatives, and local health department employees are encouraged to participate and share their expertise.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 22,500 Virginians may be living with HIV. Of that number more than 3,200 received medication through the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) which is managed through VDH’s Division of HIV/STD.

The ADAP provides medications for the treatment of Virginians with HIV who do not have insurance and are not eligible for Medicaid. Individuals must meet financial eligibility requirements established by VDH and they obtain medications through local health departments.

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 14.2 percent of adults in Virginia are uninsured and 11.2 percent of working adults lack health insurance. In addition, the U.S. Census Bureau reports that \$1.4 trillion was spent on health care in 2001, yet 41.2 million Americans lacked basic health care insurance coverage, an increase of 1.4 million from 2000. Eight out of ten uninsured Americans are from working families who come from every race, age and ethnic group.

Individuals interested in registering for this meeting should contact Safere Diawara at (804) 864-8021 or by email at: [Safere.Diawara@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:Safere.Diawara@vdh.virginia.gov). Resources for individuals with HIV are available through the HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Hotline at 1-800-533-4148.

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